

**New Jersey Department of Education  
Special Education Monitoring**

**District:** Bound Brook Borough

**County:** Somerset

**Monitoring Dates:** January 3 & 4, 2001

**Monitoring Team:** Paul Bilik, Barbara J. Tucker, Georgianna Parlacoski

**Background Information**

During the 2000-2001 school year, the Bound Brook Borough School District conducted a self-assessment of policies, procedures, programs, services, and student outcomes. This self-assessment component of the monitoring process provided the Bound Brook Borough School District with an opportunity to evaluate its strengths and areas of need with regard to:

- The provision of a free, appropriate public education (FAPE) for students with disabilities in the least restrictive environment.
- The protection of procedural safeguards for students and their families.
- The development and implementation of policies and procedures resulting in procedural compliance; and
- The organization and delivery of programs and services resulting in positive student outcomes.

The self-assessment was designed to identify areas of strength, promising practices, areas that need improvement and areas that may be noncompliant with state and federal requirements. The Bound Brook Borough School District developed an improvement plan to address identified areas of need.

The Office of Special Education Programs conducted an on-site monitoring to verify the self-assessment findings, determine the appropriateness of the improvement plan, and determine the progress in implementing the plan.

As the first step in the on-site monitoring process, the NJDOE held a focus group meeting for parents and community members on December 5, 2001. Information obtained from that meeting was used to direct the focus of the monitoring visit.

During the on-site, the NJDOE team reviewed district documents, including district policies and procedures, student count information, master student lists, class lists, schedules of students, teachers, related service personnel, and other relevant information, including a representative sample of student records. Interviews were conducted with the district's superintendent, building principals, general education and special education teachers, and child study team members.

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**I. General Provisions**

**Summary of Findings:**

During the self-assessment process, the district accurately identified themselves compliant in the areas of Policy and Procedures and public information. The required Statement of Assurances and procedures have been submitted to the county office.

During the self-assessment process, the district identified concerns regarding professional development. The district has developed an improvement plan that is sufficient to address this area of need.

An additional area of need was identified during the on-site visit regarding dissemination of IDEA funds information.

**Area of Need:**

**Dissemination of IDEA Public Information** - During the on-site monitoring, it was determined the district does not provide IDEA information to the public when it is requested.

- **The district will revise the improvement plan to include procedures to ensure that IDEA information is provided to the public when it is requested.**

**Section II: F.A.P.E.**

**Summary of Findings:**

During the self-assessment process, the district accurately identified themselves compliant in the areas of obtaining consent, length of school day and certification.

During the self-assessment process, the district identified concerns regarding transfer students. The district has developed an improvement plan that is sufficient to address this area of need. The district further identified concerns regarding extended school year, transportation, the provision of related services, goals/objectives for related services and adaptive physical education. The district has developed an improvement plan that does not sufficiently address these areas of need because it lacks procedures, in-service training and an administrative oversight component to bring about the required changes. The improvement plan must be revised to include these elements.

Additional areas of need were identified during the on-site visit regarding location of related services and the provision of programs and related services.

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### **Areas of Need:**

**Documentation of Location of Related Services** - During the on-site monitoring it was determined through the review of IEPs that although the district documents duration and frequency of related services, there is no documentation to identify the location of related services.

- **The district will revise the improvement plan to include procedures to ensure that the location of related services is documented in the IEP. It is recommended the district adopt the IEP format developed by the Office of Special Education Programs.**

**Provision of Programs and Related Services** - During the on-site monitoring it was determined through the public meeting, parent phone calls, interviews with staff and review of IEPs that students do not receive the special education programs and related services indicated in their IEPs due to insufficient staff and the district's scheduling practices.

- **The district will revise the improvement plan to include procedures to ensure programs and services are provided in accordance with IEPs. The plan must include a needs assessment to determine staffing and scheduling issues that may be impacting the district's ability to provide these programs and services. The plan must also include an administrative oversight component to ensure the implementation of the required procedures.**

### **Section III: Procedural Safeguards**

#### **Summary of Findings:**

During the self-assessment process, the district accurately identified themselves compliant in the areas of conducting all required meetings and independent evaluations.

During the self-assessment process, the district identified concerns regarding surrogate parents, required timelines, native language and documentation of attempts to obtain parental participation. The district has developed an improvement plan that is sufficient to address these areas of need. The district further identified concerns regarding notice of a meeting. The district has developed an improvement plan that does not sufficiently address this area of need because it lacks procedures, training and an administrative oversight component to bring about the required change. The improvement plan must be revised to include these elements.

Additional areas of need were identified during the on-site visit regarding the components of written notice and meeting participants.

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### **Areas of Need:**

**Components of Written Notice** - During the on-site monitoring, it was determined through record review that the district's written notice does not contain the required statements/components.

- **The district will revise the improvement plan to include procedures to ensure that all notices contain the required statements and components. It is recommended that the district adopt the notices developed by the Department of Education, Office of Special Education Programs.**

**Meeting Participants** - During the on-site monitoring it was determined through record review and interviews with staff that required participants inconsistently participate in meetings.

- **The district will revise the improvement plan to include procedures to ensure required participants participate in meetings. The plan must include an administrative oversight component to ensure implementation of the procedures.**

### **Section IV: Location, Referral, Identification**

#### **Summary of Findings:**

During the self-assessment process, the district accurately identified themselves compliant in the areas of parent referrals, health summary and vision/hearing screenings.

During the self-assessment process, the district identified concerns regarding child find and pre-referral interventions. The district has developed an improvement plan that is sufficient to address these areas of need. The district further identified concerns regarding potentially disabled students and speech referrals. The district has developed an improvement plan that does not sufficiently address these areas of need because it lacks procedures, training and an administrative oversight component to bring about the required changes. The improvement plan must be revised to include these elements.

Additional areas of need were identified during the on-site monitoring visit regarding teacher referrals, summer referrals and identification meetings.

### **Areas of Need:**

**Direct Referrals From Teachers** - During the on-site monitoring, it was determined through interviews with staff that the district's referral process does not provide a mechanism for teachers to make direct referrals to the child study team.

- **The district will revise the improvement plan to include procedures to ensure that teachers have the opportunity to make direct referrals to the child study team and to participate in a meeting when they believe the**

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**nature of the student's problem is such that an evaluation is warranted. The improvement plan must include staff training and an oversight component to ensure the implementation of the required procedures.**

**Summer Referrals** - During the on-site monitoring it was determined through interviews with staff and record review that the district does not employ child study teams during the summer months even when these services are required.

- **The district will revise the improvement plan to include procedures to ensure that when necessary during the summer months, district personnel are available to evaluate students and conduct meetings within the required timelines. The plan must include an administrative oversight component to ensure implementation of the required procedures.**

**Identification Meeting** - During the on-site monitoring visit it was determined that although the district conducts identification meetings, referral dates are not documented. As a result, it cannot be determine whether the district is complying with the 20-day timeline.

- **The district will revise the improvement plan to include procedures to ensure referral dates are identified on each referral. The plan must include an administrative oversight component to ensure implementation of the procedures.**

### **Section V: Protection in Evaluation**

#### **Summary of Findings:**

During the self-assessment process, the district accurately identified themselves compliant in the area of multi-disciplinary evaluations.

During the self-assessment process, the district identified concerns regarding bilingual evaluations, written reports for students eligible for speech and language services, standardized assessments and functional assessments. The district has developed an improvement plan that does not sufficiently address these areas of need because it lacks procedures, training and an administrative oversight component to bring about the required changes. The improvement plan must be revised to include these elements.

Additional areas of need were identified during the on-site monitoring visit regarding acceptance/rejection of reports and evaluation reports.

#### **Areas of Need:**

**Acceptance/Rejection of Reports** - During the on-site monitoring it was determined through interviews with child study team members that although there is a review of outside reports and assessments, team members do not consistently document the acceptance/rejection of these reports.

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- **The district will revise the improvement plan to include procedures to ensure consistent documentation of the acceptance/rejection of an entire report or assessment, or any part of the report or assessment. The plan must include an administrative oversight component to ensure implementation of the required procedures.**

**Dated Evaluation Reports** - During the on-site monitoring, it was determined through record review that reports were not dated.

- **The district will revise the improvement plan to include procedures to ensure that all written reports are dated. The improvement plan must include an administrative oversight component to ensure implementation of the required procedures.**

**Section VI: Reevaluation**

**Summary of Findings:**

During the self-assessment process, the district accurately identified themselves compliant in the area of reevaluation meetings.

During the self-assessment process, the district identified concerns regarding reevaluation by age 5 and conducting a reevaluation meeting within required timelines. The district has developed an improvement plan that does not sufficiently address these areas of need because it lacks an administrative oversight component to ensure the consistent implementation of the procedures. The improvement plan needs to be revised to include this component.

No additional areas of need were identified during the on-site monitoring visit.

**Section VII: Eligibility**

**Summary of Findings:**

During the self-assessment process, the district accurately identified themselves compliant in the area of the provision of PRISE to parents.

During the self-assessment process, the district identified concerns regarding the provision of evaluation reports to parents. The district has developed an improvement plan that is sufficient to address this area of need. The district further identified concerns regarding eligibility criteria and the statement of eligibility. The district has developed an improvement plan that does not sufficiently address these areas of need because it lacks procedures, training and an administrative oversight component to bring about the required changes. The improvement plan must be revised to include these elements.

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### Section VIII: IEP

#### **Summary of Findings:**

During the self-assessment process, the district accurately identified themselves compliant regarding annual reviews.

During the self-assessment process, the district identified concerns regarding student participation at IEP meetings, teacher access, teacher responsibility, age of majority, implementation dates and goals and objectives. The district has developed an improvement plan that does not sufficiently address these areas of need because it lacks procedures, training and an administrative oversight component to bring about the required changes. The improvement plan must be revised to include these elements.

An additional area of need was identified during the on-site monitoring visit regarding considerations/required statements in IEPs.

#### **Area of Need:**

**Considerations/Required Statements** - During the on-site monitoring a review of the district's IEP indicated it did not contain all of the required considerations and statements.

- **The district will revise the improvement plan to include procedures to ensure required considerations and statements are included in the district's IEP format. It is recommended that the district adopt the model IEP developed by the New Jersey Department of Education, Office of Special Education Programs.**

### Section IX: Least Restrictive Environment

#### **Summary of Findings:**

During the self-assessment process, the district identified concerns regarding individualized decision-making, placement based on IEP, out-of-district involvement, regular education access, nonacademic and extracurricular participation, and supplementary aids and services. The district has developed an improvement plan that does not sufficiently address these areas of need because it lacks procedures and an administrative oversight component to bring about the required changes. The improvement plan must be revised to include these elements.

No additional areas of need were identified during the on-site monitoring visit.

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**Section X: Transition to Post-School**

**Summary of Findings:**

During the self-assessment process, the district identified concerns regarding invitation to transition planning meetings, agency participation, interests and preferences inventory, statement of transition service needs for 14 and 16 year olds, IEP goals and objectives related to desired post-school outcomes, post-school liaison and statement of needed transition services. The district has developed an improvement plan that does not sufficiently address these areas of need because it lacks procedures, training and an administrative oversight component to bring about the required changes. The improvement plan must be revised to include these elements.

No additional areas of need were identified during the on-site monitoring visit.

**Section X: Transition to Pre-School**

**Summary of Findings:**

During the self-assessment process, the district identified concerns regarding preschool transition planning conferences. The district has developed an improvement plan that does not sufficiently address this area of need because it lacks procedures, training and an administrative oversight component to bring about the required changes. The improvement plan must be revised to include these elements.

An additional area of need was identified during the on-site monitoring visit regarding placement by the third birthday.

**Area of Need:**

**Placement by Third Birthday** - During the on-site monitoring visit it was determined through staff interviews and record interview that the district does not consistently place pre-school age students by their third birthday.

- **The district will revise the improvement plan to include procedures to ensure IEPs of preschoolers are implemented by their third birthday. The improvement plan must include an oversight component to ensure the implementation of the required changes.**

**Section XI: Discipline**

**Summary of Findings:**

During the self-assessment process, the district accurately identified themselves compliant in the areas of functional behavior assessment, behavioral intervention plans, suspension tracking, change of placement, manifestation determination meetings and discipline procedures.



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During the self-assessment process, the district identified concerns regarding procedural safeguards, appropriate interim alternative educational settings and written notification to case managers. The district has developed an improvement plan that does not sufficiently address these areas of need because it lacks procedures, training and an administrative oversight component to bring about the required changes. The improvement plan must be revised to include these elements.

No additional areas of need were identified during the on-site monitoring visit.

### **Section XII: Statewide Assessment**

#### **Summary of Findings:**

During the self-assessment process, the district accurately identified themselves compliant in the areas of accommodations and modifications for statewide assessments and participation in the SRA.

During the self-assessment process, the district identified concerns regarding alternative assessment and participation in statewide assessments. The district has developed an improvement plan that does not sufficiently address these areas of need because it lacks procedure, training and an administrative oversight component to bring about the required changes. The improvement plan must be revised to include these elements.

No additional areas of need were identified during the on-site monitoring visit.

### **Section XIII: Graduation**

#### **Summary of Findings:**

During the self-assessment process, the district identified concerns with participation in graduation activities. The district has developed an improvement plan that does not sufficiently address this area of need because it lacks procedures, training and an administrative oversight component to bring about the required changes. The improvement plan must be revised to include these elements.

Additional areas of need were identified during the on-site monitoring regarding documentation of graduation requirements in the IEP and written notice of graduation.

#### **Areas of Need:**

**Graduation Requirements Documented in IEP-** During the on-site monitoring it was determined through record review that students' IEPs did not contain graduation requirements.

- **The district will revise the improvement plan to include procedures to ensure that IEPs contain graduation requirements. The improvement plan**

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**must also include an administrative oversight component to ensure implementation of the procedures.**

**Written Notice of Graduation** - During the on-site monitoring, it was determined through record review that the district does not provide written notice of graduation to parents and adult students.

- **The district will revise the improvement plan to include procedures to ensure written notice of graduation is provided to parents and adult students prior to graduation. The plan must also include a mechanism to document this provision in student files. The improvement plan must further include an administrative oversight component to ensure implementation of the required changes.**

### **Section XIV: Programs and Services**

During the self-assessment process, the district accurately identified themselves compliant in the areas of class and group sizes and age ranges.

During the self-assessment process, the district identified concerns regarding regular and special education teacher collaboration, state facility re-entry, insufficient staff, related services schedules, documentation of home instruction records and program descriptions. The district has developed an improvement plan that does not sufficiently address these areas of need because it lacks procedures, training and an administrative oversight component to bring about the required changes. The improvement plan must be revised to include these elements.

No additional areas of need were identified during the on-site monitoring visit.

### **Section XV: Student Records**

#### **Summary of Findings:**

During the self-assessment process, the district accurately identified themselves compliant in the area of maintenance and destruction of records.

During the self-assessment process, the district identified concerns regarding parent rights to access records. The district has developed an improvement plan that does not sufficiently address this area of need because it lacks procedures and an administrative oversight component to bring about the required changes. The improvement plan must be revised to include these elements.

An additional area of need was identified during the on-site monitoring visit regarding documentation of other locations of student records.

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**Area of Need:**

**Documentation of Other Locations of Student Records** - During the on-site monitoring it was determined the district does not identify the location of other records maintained by the district in central files.

- **The district will revise the improvement plan to include procedures to ensure the location of other records is identified in central files.**

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## **Summary**

On-site special education monitoring was conducted in the Bound Brook Borough School District on January 3 and 4, 2002. The purpose of the monitoring visit was to verify the district's report of findings resulting from their self-assessment and to review the district's improvement plan. The district is commended for the thorough and comprehensive review conducted during the self-assessment process. As a result of this review the district was able to identify areas of need and develop an improvement plan that with some revision, will be sufficient to bring about systemic change.

At a focus group meeting held on December 5, 2001, the six parents who attended the meeting expressed their concerns with the inconsistency in staff and the problems surrounding the provision of related services and special education programs. It should be noted the district identified these concerns during the self-assessment process.

Areas identified as consistently compliant by the district during self-assessment and verified during the on-site monitoring visit included policy and procedures, required Statement of Assurances and procedures, consent, length of school day, certification, conducting all required meetings, independent evaluations, parent referrals, health summary, vision/hearing screening, multi-disciplinary evaluations, reevaluation meetings, provision of PRISE, annual reviews, functional behavior assessments, behavioral intervention plans, suspension tracking, change in placement, manifestation determination, discipline procedures, accommodations and modifications for statewide assessments, participation in the SRA, class and group size, age ranges and maintenance and destruction of student records.

During the self-assessment process, the district identified areas of need regarding professional development, transfer students, extended school year, transportation, provision of related services, goals/objectives for related services, adaptive physical education, surrogate parents, required timelines, native language, documentation of attempts to obtain parental participation, notification of a meeting, child find activities, pre-referral interventions, bilingual evaluations, written reports, standardized assessments, reevaluations completed by age 5, reevaluation meetings, provision of evaluation reports to parents, eligibility criteria, student participation at IEP meetings, teacher access, teacher responsibility to the IEP, age of majority, implementation dates, goals and objectives in IEPs, individualized decision-making, placement based on the IEP, out-of-district involvement, regular education access, nonacademic and extracurricular participation, supplementary aids and services, transition services to post-school, preschool transition planning conference, procedural safeguards, interim alternative educational settings, written notification of removal to case manager, alternative assessment, participation in statewide assessment, participation in graduation activities, teacher collaboration, state facility re-entry, insufficient staff, related services schedules, documentation of home instruction records, program description and parents rights to access to student records.

The on-site visit identified additional areas of need within the various standards regarding dissemination of information regarding IDEA funds, location of related services, provision of programs and related services, written notice, meeting participants, teacher referrals, summer referrals, acceptance/rejection of reports, dated

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evaluation reports, identification meeting, consideration and required statements in the IEP, placement by the third birthday, graduation requirements, written notice of graduation and documentation of other locations of student records.

Within forty-five days of receipt of the monitoring report, the district will revise and resubmit the improvement plan to the Office of Special Education Programs to address the areas of need identified during the on-site visit and those areas that require revisions to the improvement plan.

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